Writing SMART*er* Objectives

What are performance objectives (POs) and what do I need to know about them?

- POs describe the specific results (the "what") that you achieve, focusing on the product, service or accomplishment resulting from a particular work activity, rather than the activity itself.
- POs provide focus to your work to ensure that your actions are directed toward achieving and aligning to mission-related outcomes.
- POs should also be appropriate for your level, work duties and in line with your professional development goals. Work with your manager or supervisor to ensure that your POs are appropriate.
- POs should be written according to the SMART framework (the acronym "SMART" is used to describe objectives that are Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound). SMART is the test by which Army DCIPS employees, managers, and oversight bodies will judge both the quality and fairness of objectives against which employee performance will be measured.

What is the SMART framework?

Framework:	Description:	Why it is important:
S= Specific	• An observable or verifiable accomplishment is described. • Specificity helps ensure that you and your managers and supervisors share the same expectations. • Additionally, the objective should be specific about the results; not about the way in which it is achieved.	• Evaluating performance on an objective requires that the outcome can be verified. • The more specific it is, the easier it is to evaluate and for you to understand what the product or service should look like upon completion. • Once you know what the outcome should look like, you can focus on how to accomplish the PO effectively.

M= Measurable	• A method or procedure to assess and record the behavior or action for which the objective focuses, and the quality of the outcome.
	• When defining the measurability aspect of your PO, remember to write it at the "Successful" performance level (i.e., rating of 3).
	• Common types of measurement include:
	  ○ Quantity – amount produced (e.g., raw numbers or percentages)
	  ○ Quality – accuracy, effectiveness
	  ○ Time – within 6 months, by January 31st
	  ○ Cost-effectiveness – efficiency resulting in time or money saved
		• Impartial evaluations of whether the PO was achieved are difficult without specific measures.
		• The measurement component of a PO should reflect the important dimensions of the product.

A= Achievable	• PO should be sufficiently challenging, but not so complex that it cannot be accomplished. • Consider whether or not the PO can be accomplished with the resources, personnel, and time available. • PO must be appropriate for your experience, skill, work level, and position within the organization.	• The primary benefit of making sure an objective is achievable is fairness to you. Setting requirements that exceed the expectations for your work level or requirements that cannot be completed with the resources available is unfair and inappropriate.
R= Relevant	• The PO should be important to you and your organization's mission. • Managers/supervisors must have a clear understanding of their own POs before they can effectively work with you to establish your POs.	• Establishing relevance ensures you understand how you contribute to larger goals and the success of the organization. • The linkage should be explicitly written in the PO statement. It may be as simple as saying, "This objective supports the organization's strategic goal of XYZ."
T= Time-bound	• There is a point in time when the PO starts/ends. • POs should be written so they can be accomplished during a single evaluation period.	• The primary benefit of a time-bound PO is that it sets expectations for you. Achievement of the PO can be measured against the timeframe set for completion.

Why are SMART objectives important?

Defense Intelligence Strategy - National Intelligence

Army Campaign Plan

Army Intelligence Campaign Plan

ACOM/ASCC/DRU/DoD Joint Goals

Command Goals

Work Unit Goals

Employee Performance Objectives

As an Army DCIPS employee, you should understand how your individual POs align to organizational success. Work with your managers and supervisors to ensure that you understand the organizational strategic plan and how it aligns to the Department of the Army's mission and goals.

In addition, writing SMART POs is a critical component of the Plan Phase in the annual performance management cycle. If your objectives adhere to the SMART framework, you will know exactly what is expected of you, and your supervisor will be able to accurately assess and rate your performance at the end of the cycle. Effectively written POs are a key component of the performance management system; they serve as an important factor in determining individual PO ratings and, ultimately, in making bonus decisions.

Tips for Success

After you have made a list of the most important job duties or work activities for the job and have selected a result to which you can write your POs, you can start applying the SMART framework.

- If you find that following the letters of the SMART acronym (beginning with S) is not the best way to write your POs, consider applying the principles of the framework in the order of **MARST**. Sometimes, it may be easier to start with the measurable aspect because if you do not know what you are going to measure and how it will be measured, the result selected might not be a suitable PO.
- Once you have completed writing your SMART objectives, check that your POs:
  o Clearly link to the strategic goals or objectives of the organization, as well as to the goals and objectives of the work unit and/or your supervisor.
  o Relate to a critical or important work activity you perform. Was the objective written using a position description, duty statement, performance example, or other guidelines as a reference to ensure relevance?
  o Are appropriate to your occupation and work level.
  o Provide a degree of challenge that will stretch you, yet will still be achievable.
  o Specify an end result rather than just the work activity.
  o Include at least one type of measurement (e.g., quality, quantity, cost-effectiveness or timeliness).
  o Specify a period of performance (i.e., is it time-bound, such as "within one month").
  o Can be accomplished within a single evaluation period.
  o Are written at the "Successful" level of performance.
  o Are written in a way that allows you to exceed it (i.e., it is not written as pass/fail and avoids using words like *all, always,* or *never*).
  o Are consistent with objectives written for other, similar jobs within the organization in terms of responsibilities and difficulty of the work.
  o Are not lengthy lists of tasks or define all expected results or outcomes. You are expected to have continuing communication with your manager/supervisor during the rating cycle to discuss expectations of particular tasks/projects as needed.

Examples of SMARTer Objectives

The SMART*er* objectives on the right demonstrate how you can enhance your performance objectives to meet all of the SMART framework criteria.

Performance Objective #1	SMART*er* Objective #1	
Analyze the effects of U.N. imposed sanctions on the [X country] industrial sector and present the results of that analysis in a finished and appropriately coordinated intel report for release to the policy-making community. The complete product will reflect engagement with other analysts and stakeholders and will incorporate the coordinated views of other analysts and collectors throughout the IC.	Analyze the effects of U.N. imposed sanctions on the [X country] industrial sector **by 21 July 2011** and present the results in a finished and **appropriately coordinated intel report** for release to the policy-making community. Completed product will **reflect engagement with other analysts and stakeholders; incorporate the coordinated views of other analysts and collectors throughout the IC**; and will make use of available intelligence from **at least 90%** of relevant sources **as dictated by ICD standards**.	**Time-bound** **Specific** **Relevant** **Achievable** **Measurable**

Performance Objective #2	SMART*er* Objective #2	
Record Dedicated Disclosure Letters (DDL) 100% of the time. DDLs will be processed for staffing and require only minor changes, as determined by supervisor review.	Record Dedicated Disclosure Letters (DDLs) **within 5 working days** of receipt **at least 90%** of the time. DDLs will be processed for staffing within **10 working days** of receipt **at least 90%** of the time and require only minor changes for **document format, punctuation, spelling, or wording changes**, **as determined by supervisor review and in accordance with current standard operating procedures**. **This supports X goal**.	**Time-bound** **Achievable** **Specific** **Measurable** **Relevant**

Performance Objective #3	SMART*er* Objective #3	
Inventory and maintain accountability for all assigned equipment. Resolve and document any discrepancies in accordance with current standard operating procedures.	Inventory and maintain accountability **for all assigned property, computer equipment, and telephones**. Achieve **at least 95% accuracy** of inventories on a quarterly basis. Document discrepancies **within one business day** of identification, and initiate an investigation **in accordance with current standard operating procedures**. **This supports X goal**.	**Specific** **Achievable** **Time-bound** **Measurable** **Relevant**

Performance Objective #4	SMART*er* Objective #4	
Submit intelligence products on Improvised Explosive Device (IED) incidents and networks in X and X areas of interest. Products will be timely and will enhance the overall knowledge base of key IED tactics, techniques, and procedures within the area of operations as determined by supervisory review. Products will be completed by the agreed upon suspense dates.	Submit intelligence products on Improvised Explosive Device (IED) incidents and networks in X and X areas of interest. Products will be timely (i.e., **executive summaries and global snapshot articles** will report key IED incidents **within three days** of receiving intelligence) and will enhance the overall knowledge base of key IED tactics, techniques, and procedures within the area of operations as determined by supervisory review. **Products will adhere to the WTI lexicon** and **require no more than two drafts** for grammatical and content errors. Products will be completed by the agreed upon suspense dates. **This objective supports the Director's priority intelligence requirements.**	**Specific** **Time-bound** **Measurable** **Achievable** **Relevant**

1. **Guide to Writing Effective Objectives, Self Assessments and Evaluations**
   (http://www.dami.army.pentagon.mil/site/dcips/docs/Lifecycle/ER/Guide%20to%20Writing%20Effective%20Objectives,%20Self%20Accomplishments%20and%20Evaluations%20[Fall%202009].pdf)

2. **ODNI Guide to Writing Effective Objectives**
   (http://www.dami.army.pentagon.mil/site/dcips/docs/Lifecycle/ER/ODNI%20Guide%20to%20Writing%20Effective%20Objectives_Final.doc)

3. **Supplementary Online Training for Supervisors – Writing Performance Objectives**
   (http://odni.touch-point.net/index_1.html)

4. **Train-the-Trainer Session: Workshop for Writing Effective Performance Objectives**
   (http://www.dami.army.pentagon.mil/site/dcips/docs/Lifecycle/ER/Perf_Obj_Workshop_Briefing_Train-the-Trainer_v2.ppt)

5. **Instructor Guide: Writing Effective Performance Objectives**
   (http://www.dami.army.pentagon.mil/site/dcips/docs/Lifecycle/ER/Performance_Objective_Workshop_Protocol_Army_v2.docx)

6. **Performance Objective Template**
   (http://www.dami.army.pentagon.mil/site/dcips/docs/Lifecycle/ER/Perf%20Obj%20Template_Army%20workshops.doc)

7. **Exercise: Before and After Review of Objectives**
   (http://www.dami.army.pentagon.mil/site/dcips/docs/Lifecycle/ER/Before%20and%20After%20Review%20of%20Objectives.docx)

8. **SMART Objectives Repository**
   (http://www.dami.army.pentagon.mil/site/dcips/docs/Lifecycle/ER/SMART%20Objectives%20Repository.xls)

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